

## **Public Safety Update**

There is nothing more important to me than ensuring a safe community for all Cobb residents. Two years ago Director Sam Heaton presented the Board of Commissioners with a plan to address recruitment and retention challenges in the police department. The Board unanimously adopted this plan and has since worked together, with the public safety team, to implement it and other enhancements to ensure that our police force is the best equipped and best trained in the state.

I am proud of the bold public safety initiatives that Cobb is moving forward.

### **Police Improvement Plan**

As a result of the recommendations of this Plan, a total of 80 police officers were added in 2015 and 2016. Shift differential and 10 hour shifts have been implemented. This deployment method results in better police coverage, less overtime and an improved quality of life for officers. In an effort to get more officers hired and in the field speedily, the number of investigators assigned to the recruiting and hiring division and the number of annual police academies has doubled.

### **Police Evaluation**

Nationwide, there are ongoing discussions regarding the role of police officers in our communities. There are many valuable and diverse perspectives and opinions about how local governments need to adapt and evolve in today's environment. To ensure that Cobb County continues to adapt and evolve, this week, the Board of Commissioners authorized the public safety department to solicit bids for a comprehensive review of all police policies and practices.

This includes community relations, diversity training, the citizen complaint process and other areas as identified by the public safety team and the entity conducting the evaluation.

### **Anti-Gang Initiative**

Together, with the offices of the Sherriff and District Attorney, we have put a full court press on addressing gang related crime.

Last month, the police department added five additional officers to the street CAGE (Cobb Anti-Gang Enforcement) Unit. A dedicated gang analyst will be hired to work closely with the gang database. Most importantly, we are ramping up gang enforcement training of officers across all precincts. Each of the five precincts will contribute two officers per shift and 35 part time officers will attend gang meetings, receive specialized gang training, and work with the CAGE officers in the field and in intelligence.

The message to these offenders is clear- You are not welcome in Cobb County.

### **More to come**

In 2016, we will begin planning for a new police headquarters and world-class joint training facility. In an ongoing effort to strengthen accountability and trust with the community, the police department will be purchasing an additional 100 body cameras. Almost 200 new police cruisers will be purchased and we will begin to implement a take home car policy. This is an incentive for recruitment and retention and increases police presence across the county.

Public safety is paramount in every community and make no mistake about it, the individuals who risk their lives every day to protect ours are the true heroes of Cobb County. I am proud that during the last few years, while many communities were facing public safety cuts, Cobb County has been able to add resources and increase funding, while also cutting taxes. I look forward to working with the Board to make sure that Cobb County's police department continues to be recognized as one of the best in the State and nation.